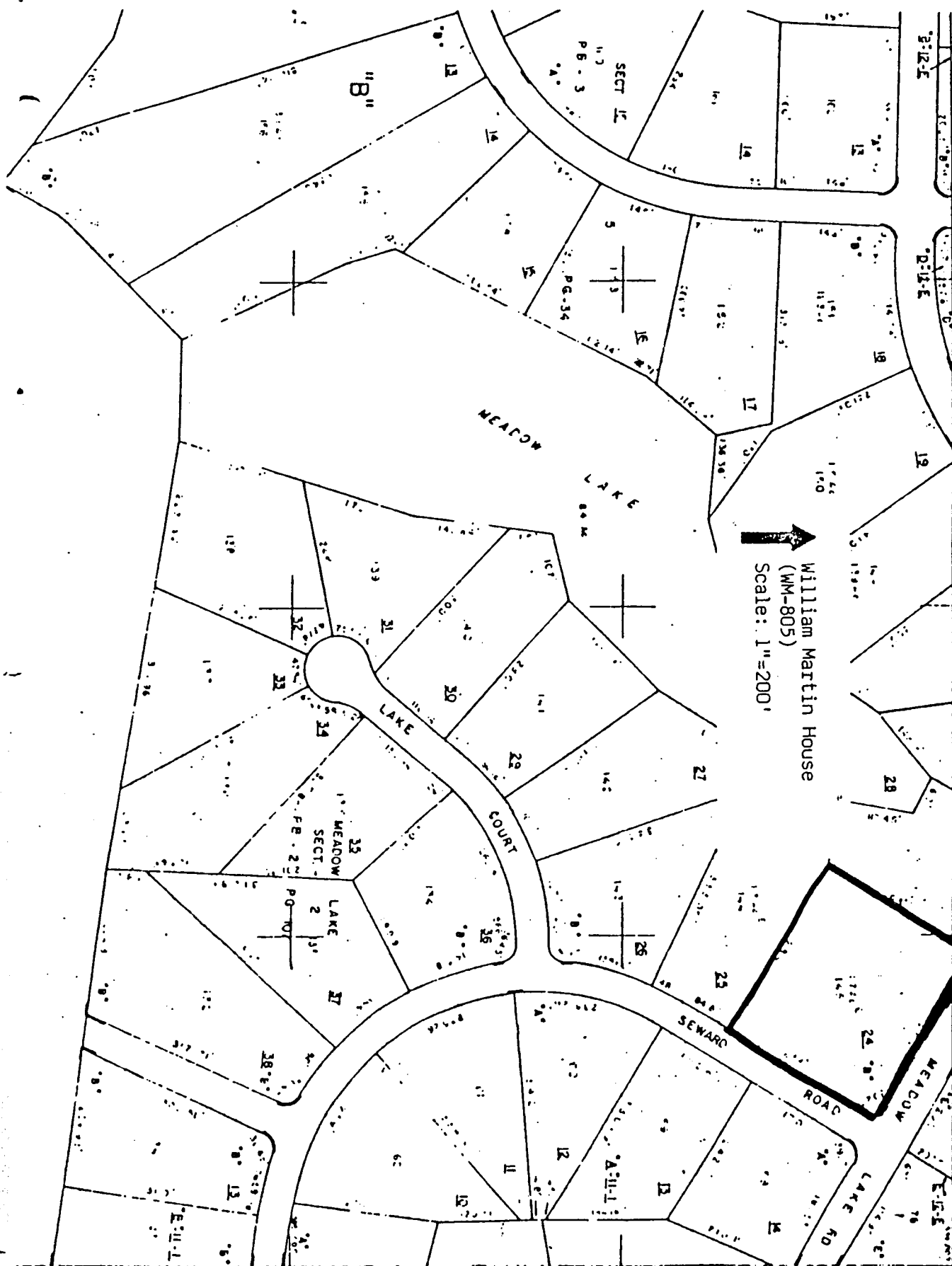


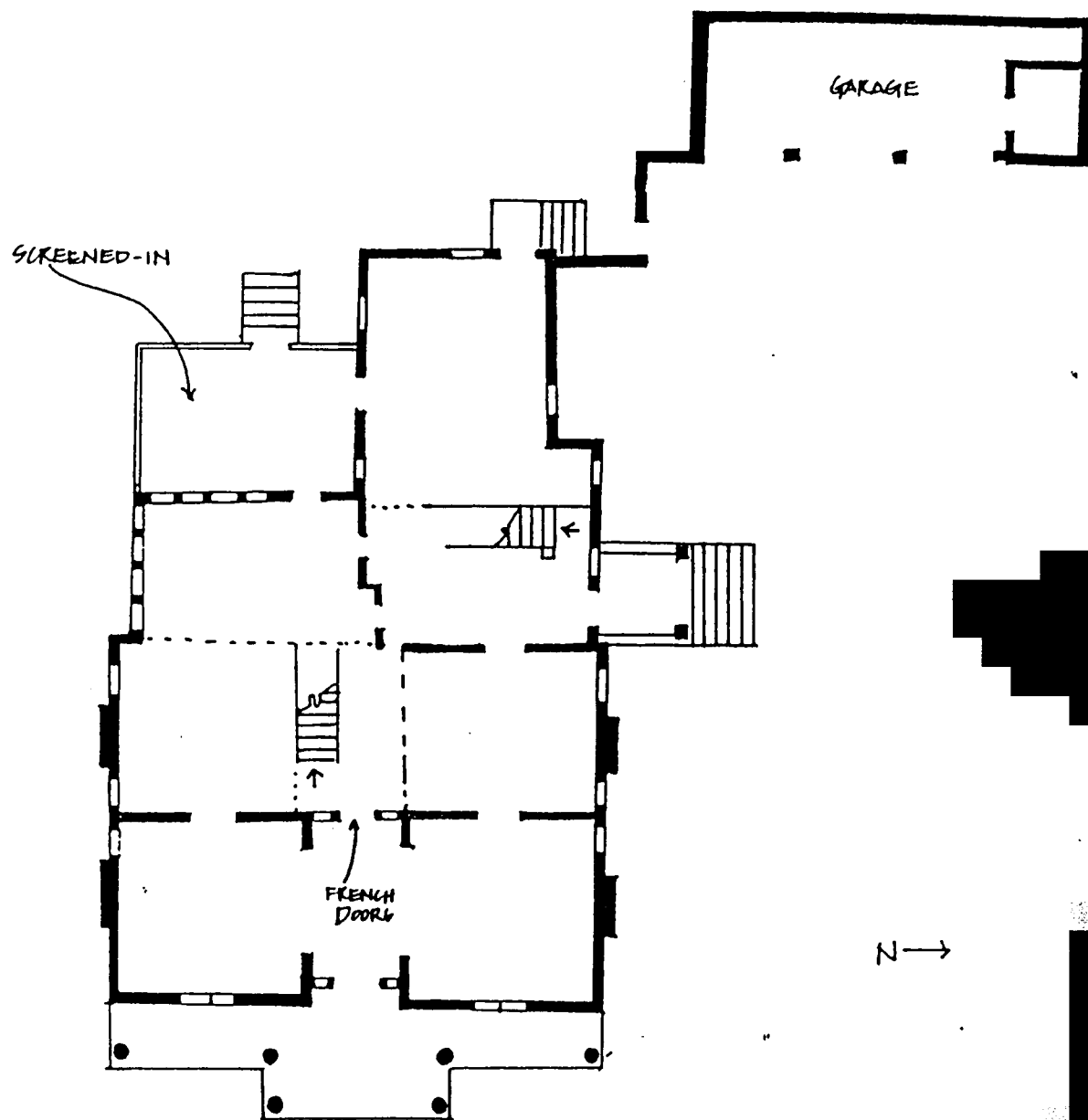
BOXWOOD HALL

MR. AND MRS. JAMES AND NELL FOWLER

5215 SEWARD ROAD  
MEADOWLAKE SUBDIVISION  
BRENTWOOD, TN 37027



#805 WILLIAM MARTIN HOUSE



of the early 20th century. It is the only stone residence built in this style in the county outside of Franklin and one of the largest and unaltered. The other five nominated Neo-Classical or Colonial Revival design residences are of frame or brick construction. The house displays Colonial influenced detailing in the porch, doors, windows and other exterior details. The house has not been significantly altered and retains its original appearance.

The earliest house on this site was a ca. 1850 single story frame residence owned by the Hayes family. In the late 19th century Elizabeth Hayes married Dr. William Martin, a college professor and they resided here at the turn of the century. Around 1910, the house was totally remodeled into a large two-story stone veneer Colonial Revival residence. The original frame structure was supposedly incorporated into the present building. Upon completion the house was one of the most prominent of its style in the county. In 1924, the house was sold to Mrs. William Smartt and it was later the home of A.J. Dyer. The William Martin House remains one of the largest and most notable Colonial Revival residences in the county and has not been altered.

Acreage: 1.7 acres

UTM References: Oak Hill Quad/16/517440/3986660

Verbal Boundary Description and Justification: The boundary for the William Martin House is illustrated on accompanying Williamson County tax map # 12-L, lot 24. The boundary includes the legal boundary of the property and is sufficient to protect the historical setting of the site.

Supplemental Bibliographical References: Interview, Mrs. Robert Fowler, November 30, 1987.

#805

TENNESSEE MULTIPLE PROPERTY FORM

Title: Historic Resources of Williamson County

Historic Name: Martin, William, House (WM-805)

Common Name: Boxwood Hall

Classification: Building

Owner: James Fowler, 5215 Seward Rd, Brentwood, TN 37027

Location: 5215 Seward Rd., Brentwood

Contributing:

Buildings 2

Structures 0

Sites 0

Total: 2

Non-Contributing:

Buildings 0

Structures 0

Sites 0

Total: 0

Description:

The William Martin House is a two-story stone veneer residence which was originally built ca. 1850 but extensively altered into a Colonial Revival design ca. 1910. On the main (east) facade is a one-story porch with ca. 1910 fluted Doric columns. The porch rests on a stone slab floor. The main entrance has ca. 1910 multi-light glass and frame doors with single-light sidelights and transom. Over the door is a projecting dentilled cornice. Flanking the doors on the main facade are French design, three-light sidelights with frame lower panels and added shutters. The windows are four-over-four sash with original shutters. On the roofline of the main facade are three hipped dormers with modillion blocks and four-over-four sash windows with shutters. The windows have stone sills and lintels.

On the north facade is a small one-story porch with square frame posts. At the southwest corner is a one-story sunroom with four-over-four sash windows and screened porch. The stone foundation has two-light casement windows. In the gable fields of the upper facade is slate, and the eaves have modillion blocks. The interior is organized in a central hall plan with all details dating from the ca. 1910 remodeling. According to the owner these include architrave molding at the doors and ornate, Federal style fluted mantles. Interior photography was not possible. To the rear of the house is a ca.1910 one-story stone garage.

Period of Significance: ca. 1910

Area of Significance: Architecture

Criterion: C

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Statement of Significance:

The William Martin House is a notable example of a Colonial Revival Residence

#### **BOXWOOD HALL**

The original Boxwood Hall was built in 1852 by Emily McGavock Hayes and her husband Oliver Bliss Hayes on land given to her by her father Lysander McGavock. That house burned while the couple was on their honeymoon. Another house was built, which is incorporated into this house. Elizabeth Hayes, daughter of the builders, and her husband W.W. Martin built the present house of hand-cut stone from a quarry located where the Brentwood Baptist Church now stands. There are 10 fireplaces in the house and six bedrooms. It is presently owned by Mr. and Mrs. James Fowler.

#### **Brentwood Brochure**

## Home of the Week

# The Meadowlake Mansion

"Our house is our hobby," says Mrs. Nell Fowler of Meadowlake in Brentwood. She and her husband, Jim, who works for Genesco, have spent seven years renovating Boxwood Hall, the sixty-year-old stone mansion which is their home.

"Originally we lived in a very contemporary home on Brook Hollow Road in Nashville," explains Mrs. Fowler, "but about ten years ago we decided that we wanted to buy an old home which we could enjoy remodeling ourselves."

After looking for several years, the Fowlers discovered the then-deserted stone mansion in February 1965. "The old house was in terrible shape, but we were so excited that we practically bought it without a second thought," remembers Mrs. Fowler. "We began work-

ing immediately on rewiring and installing a new heating system, but it was July before we were able to move in."

The first few months in the house were without many conveniences. "There was no kitchen when we moved in, so we set up an old stove in the utility room and used a mop sink for dishwashing," said Mrs. Fowler. "My cabinet was a door across two sawhorses."

Boxwood Hall traces its history to Hayesland, the home built in 1852 by Emily McGavock Hayes and Oliver Bliss Hayes, Jr., on a hill to the north of the present mansion. This original home burned shortly after it was completed, and a second, smaller house was built on the site of the present structure. This house was referred to as "the cottage" and is believed to have later

been incorporated into the stone mansion.

Elizabeth, daughter of the Hayesland namesakes, married Dr. W. W. Martin, a Methodist minister and professor of Hebrew at Vanderbilt University. In the early 1900s Dr. Martin built the present house of handcut stone from a private quarry located where the new Brentwood Baptist Church now stands.

Hayesland was sold to Mrs. William Smart in 1924, and then to Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Dyer in 1935. The Dyers added the front porch, breakfast room and back porch to the house, built the large lake back of the house, and renamed the home Boxwood Hall. The ceramic tiled back porch, the favorite summer room for the Fowlers, features wicker and redwood furniture.

The front room on the main floor opens across the full width of the house and includes fireplaces at either end. (A total of ten fireplaces are in the house.) Wide doors open into the central hallway where Jim Fowler has "almost" completed refinishing the beautiful wooden stairway. The task of removing the several layers of paint and varnish has for the most part been done with dental tools. New visitors to the house always comment on the small elevator which was installed by the Dyers, according to Mrs. Fowler.

As might be expected, one of the first areas of the house to be renovated by the Fowlers was the kitchen. The old brick fireplace at the back of the house was reversed to face into the new kitchen. The cabinet work of wormy butternut was designed by Jim Fowler.

The second floor of the house includes six bedrooms and a study. On the third floor are six more bedrooms. As in many houses of the period, the bedroom closets are cabinet-like and sit out into the rooms.

The state of the house has withstood the years, but



Boxwood Hall stands in the midst of the contemporary homes of the Meadowlake subdivision in Brentwood. The grounds between the stone mansion and the rock wall were the formal gardens of the Hayesland estate.

the plumbing has been more problematic. "The plumbing has been our most persistent problem," admits Mrs. Fowler.

The grounds of the house are as fascinating as the build-

ing itself. To the south is a hand-placed stone wall which runs west to the lake. Recently drained, dredged and stocked by the Meadowlake Association, the spring-fed lake is on the back edge of the property and the Fowlers are now terracing and planting along the water's edge.

Between the stone wall and the house was the formal garden of the estate. "We are still discovering old walkways in the yard," notes Mr. Fowler. Several massive elm, maple and cedar trees give evidence of the age of the gardens.

Although one of the three young Fowler children occasionally asks, "Why don't we have a house like other people?" Neil and Jim Fowler are obviously taking much pride and pleasure in their

## Baptists Plan Open House

Brentwood Baptist Church will host an open house Sunday afternoon, April 30, to give persons in the Community an opportunity to tour the newly dedicated building at Meadowlake and Franklin Road. Rev. William G. Wilson, pastor, and members of his congregation will be in attendance.

## Little Harpeth—

(continued from page 4)



# Boxwood Hall featured in tour of Brentwood homes

By Lauren Lexa

Assistant Editor

The sound of Franklin Road traffic is far removed from Brentwood's Boxwood Hall.

Although only a short drive from the busy thoroughfare through Meadow Lake subdivision, the 139-year-old stone house is surrounded by a vast yard that slopes down to an 8-acre backyard lake shared by 16 neighbors and wild geese.

Traces of the 2,000-year-old Stone Box Indians, or Mound Builders, can still be found in the ground — bear teeth and fired clay beads from necklaces, bone needles and stone tools. Remnants from Civil War skirmishes, like a rifle, a saber, steel balls and uniform buttons, have also been found around the lake and its eight natural springs.

Boxwood Hall owner Jim Fowler said most of the Indian relics were found purely by accident as he and his wife, Nell, worked in the yard; the Fowlers have owned the stone house for about 26 years.

"Originally, there were three rooms to the house when it was started in 1852," Fowler said. "We think it was just a frame house, and the stone, which was quarried nearby, was added at the turn of the century.

"This was a house that was built to last," he said. And, indeed, the slate-roofed house has lasted; its craftsmanship and seven other homes will be featured on the Brentwood Historic Commission's annual tour Oct. 5-6.

The three-story Boxwood Hall, which also has a basement that runs almost the length of the house, has 12-foot ceilings in the living and the room above, 10-foot ceilings through the rest of the house, and 10 fireplaces; each of the fireplace mantles are different. There are

two staircases, also; the original staircase is at what is now the side entrance to the home, and the wide front staircase made from "golden oak" was added at the turn of the century.

"I think it took me three years to strip the paint off that front staircase," Fowler joked.

Boxwood Hall, unlike many homes its age, was spared drastic alterations over the years. The Fowlers enclosed the back porch which overlooks a brick patio and arbor. They also erected walls in the front area of the home, creating a music room, a foyer and a living room.

Several outbuildings built in the early 1900s stand around the lake. The largest spring feeding the lake flows through the stone "refrigerator" house; because the spring flows from an underground cave, its water was cool enough to keep the perishables stored there from spoiling. After electricity became available in the 1930s, a stone structure was built around a pump house that brought water up to Boxwood Hall. Other homes featured on the tour are the Fly Home, owned by Mr. and Mrs. James Hackett; Forge Seat, owned by Mr. and Mrs. James Cason; Gorrell House, owned by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Gorrell; the Knox Crockett House, owned by Mr. and Mrs. Bob Williams; Oak Hall, owned by Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy Wilson; Maryland Manor, owned by Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Carroll and Mooreland Mansion in the Koger Center.

Tickets, \$8 in advance and \$10 on tour days, are available at the Brentwood Municipal Center, the Brentwood Public Library, the Brentwood Chamber of Commerce, the Nashville Bank of Commerce inside the Brentwood Place Kroger, and Harpeth Antique Mall in Franklin.



Staff photo by Lauren Lexa

Boxwood Hall owner Jim Fowler and his grandchildren, Wells Fowler, 1 1/2, Aubin Fowler, 5, stand outside the Fowlers' circa 1852 stone house, that will be featured on the Brentwood Historic Commission's second annual October tour of homes. With the Fowlers are tour chairmen Dwinna Walker (second from right) who holds a quilt made by Nell Fowler's grandmother, and Diane Sylvis (right) who holds a quilt made by Nell Fowler's mother, who will be doing quilt demonstrations during the tour.

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Rev Ap  
9/8/91





## Nell Fowler

### **PRESERVATIONIST**

Nell Fowler vividly remembers her first glimpse of Boxwood Hall a quarter of a century ago. "Like something from 'The Munsters,'" she laughs. But knee-deep in weeds, Fowler looked past broken windows and peeling paint and saw a lovely home.

The Fowlers' live-in renovation of Boxwood Hall, circa 1840, stretched to 20 years as Nell and her husband Jim, owner of Glengary Gallery, raised their three children in a unique setting in the midst of Brentwood's Meadow Lake subdivision.

Today Fowler can't imagine living anywhere other than the 15-room house with 10 fireplaces and 14-inch thick bluestone walls. As a free-lance designer specializing in older home renewal, the house is still her inspiration.

A supporter of the Brentwood Historic Trust, Fowler is a longtime advocate of historic preservation and sees her hopes realized in this city-sponsored organization.

"Updating a house while preserving its flavor brings a good feeling. We need to be more aware of these older homes because each has its own personality, and when you destroy that, something is gone that can't be recaptured."